PART 11 –
Other Manufacturers

Following are the early Maine lure makers other than the major manufacturers. Percy Tackle Company, founded by Gardner A. Percy, primarily made fishing flies but is included here because it made and sold one fishing lure – the Rangeley Spinner. Percy produced a large variety of Rangeley Spinners. Other makers in this section made only one lure before the 1930s, and thus are included in this section (i.e., Hobbs and Kismet). In addition to these manufactures, I also included one distributor of early lures, T. B. Davis Arms Company of Portland, Maine. T. B. Davis sold a wide selection of fishing tackle, both retail and wholesale. Among the stock they handled were a few of the early makers, including Stanley and Burgess. Lastly, I discuss a two very early patented spring hooks invented in Maine along with a specialized hook patented by a Maine inventor and manufactured in the Pine Tree State.

The following companies are alphabetically arranged and no chronological order is implied by this arrangement.

Franklin W. Hobbs
Bangor, Maine

The first sentence of Hobbs’ obituary, published in the *Bangor Daily News*, states that “one of Bangor’s best citizens died Monday afternoon at his home.” Franklin W. Hobbs was born in Bangor, Maine, and received his early education in Thorndike and Caribou, Maine. In his early twenties and working as a steam engineer, he took correspondence courses and soon became an “electro nickel plater.” Hobbs became widely recognized metal plater, publishing regularly in *Maine Fishing Lures* by Wm. B. Krohn - 128
technical journals. A short biographical sketch published in the June 1918 issue of *The Metal Industry*, a national journal housed in New York City, concluded the following about the man:

Mr. Hobbs certainly deserves great credit for having taken his degree in the university of the world, as he was forced to leave school early and obtain his present efficiency not only in his chosen field, but also in general knowledge, by home study and observation.

After completing correspondence courses in the early 1890s, Hobbs started his own electroplating business and quickly brought on a partner. The company dissolved after a few years and around 1898, Hobbs became foremen electroplater for Wood & Bishop Company, a Bangor firm that made stoves, furnaces, and tin and iron ware. In 1918, he moved to Crogan Manufacturing Company where he was superintendent of their elector-plating and metal furnishing department. Also located in Bangor, Crogan made saws and steel measuring tapes. After Crogan ceased operations, Hobbs again worked in his own company for last eight years of his life.

Franklin W. Hobbs, who had been born in Bangor during 1872, married Alice M. Roberts of Waldo, Maine on January 4, 1898. The couple owned a house 27 Lane Street in Bangor. In the early 1930s, just a few years after patenting his lure, Hobbs’ health started to fail. He died at his in the spring of 1936, leaving behind his wife, son, and a sister. Hobbs is buried next to his wife in Bangor’s Mt. Hope Cemetery.

Hobbs included the following drawing:

![Drawing](image)

This lure was named for Lake Lucerne (a.k.a. Phillips Lake), which is located 8 miles southeast of Bangor, Maine. The Lucerne Lure was manufactured in only one size (the shaft is 4 ¼ inch long) and came with a box swivel and a feathered (i.e., red and white) treble hook. I have seen this lure with brass or cooper upper blades; the lower blade is nickel. The blades of the Lucerne Lure are exceptionally thin, but as an electro platter Hobbs would have familiar with the various uses and limitations of different kinds of metals. Stamping of this lure also shows variation because I have seen lures with only the upper blade stamped, and other with both blades stamped. In all cases the stamping is on one side of the blade as follows: “‘LUCERNE’ / Pat. Applied For’. ” This amount of variation over a short time period (the lure’s patent was applied for in 1926, and Hobbs died only a decade later) suggests that the Lucerne Lure was not

*Maine Fishing Lures* by Wm. B. Krohn - 130
mass produced, but hand-made in small lots. The box measures 4 5/8 X 1 3/4 X 1 inches.

For more information about this lure and Frank Hobbs, including a portrait of Hobbs, see Krohn’s (2015a) article cited below.

\section*{Percy Tackle Company}
\textbf{Portland, Maine}

Gardner A. Percy, who became a “nationally known designer of fishing flies,” was born on February 28, 1887 in Newport, Vermont. On August 6, 1910, he married Mildred H. Mitchell of Stow, Massachusetts. In 1913, Gardner worked as a papermaker in Westbrook, Maine. Later he worked for the railroad. Gardner and Mildred started commercially tying fishing flies in their Woodford Street home northwest of downtown Portland in 1926. They specialized in making streamer flies, and some four years later the business was located in Congress Street in Portland.

\textit{Maine Fishing Lures} by Wm. B. Krohn - 131
His two sons, Gardner A. and Lisle C., joined the business in the late 1940s. Gardner junior apparently predeceased his father and when Gardner senior died on September 19, 1949 – at age 62 – Lisle continued the business. By the 1960s the business was no longer owned by a Percy and the company ceased operations in the late 1970s. Gardner A. Percy is buried in Eastern Cemetery, Gorham, Maine.

Percy Tackle Company remained throughout it’s existence primarily a fly-typing business.

Following are a few examples of work by the Percys:

The following price list dates to approximately 1930 because the address on the cover shows that the Percys were working from their Woodford home and had not yet move to 506 ½

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Congress Street. This list gives the prices for three grades of trout flies: Grade A flies sold for 50 cents each, Grade B flies each retailed for 40 cents, and the Standard Grade sold for 25 cents apiece. Trout flies with barbless hooks each sold for 30 cents. Salmon flies sold for $1.00 each for a single hook; double hook salmon flies went for $1.50 each. Bass flies retailed for 25 cents each.

Only one of the list’s nine pages discusses fishing lures. As can be seen in the illustration on the right below (booklet’s green cover on the left), the Rangeley Spinner was the featured lure on this one page:

Percy Tackle sold this classic Maine lure both on cards in boxes, and on cards alone.

Following are a few examples of Percy Rangeley Spinners:

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Percy Rangeley Spinners were sold in boxes that did not identify the company (illustration on the left, above), but the spinner is clearly a Percy and other have recognized these boxes Percy’s (e.g., see page 315, middle row, in Jeff Kieny’s 2008 book *Patented Hooks, Harnesses, and Baited-Holders – Identification and Value Guide with Collections*). Percy sold a great variety of Rangeley Spinners, a few of which are shown above. Note especially the illustration on the right that shows spinners with single and double blades, blades colored coated gold or nickel, while another spinner has blades made of shell (far left).

**T. B. Davis Arms Company**

The title of T. B. Davis’ circa 1927 tackle catalog declared that the Company, incorporated in 1893, functioned as “Jobbers of Fine Fishing Tackle.” As such, the Company would purchase goods from manufacturers and sell wholesale to retailers. The retailers, in turn, sell the products
to the public. Thus, when it came to fishing tackle, T. B. Davis Arms Company saw itself mainly as a middleman (although they did also sell retail via their store in downtown Portland). For example, the circa 1930 fishing tackle catalog of Davis has an extensive inventory of Bill Burgess tackle, demonstrating how T. B. Davis Arms Company was Burgess’ middleman. But Davis also sold some tackle with the Company’s name although T. B. Davis did not make the product themselves. For example, Rangeley Spinners can be found that were sold in boxes labeled by T. B. Davis Company stating: “Made Expressly for T. B. Davis Co.,” or “Made In Maine … Tied Expressly for T. B. Davis Arms Co.” Following are examples of each (boxes measures 7 ½ X 1 5/8 X 5/8 inches).

Courtesy of Robert Stewart (upper spinner) and author’s collection (lower spinner).

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T. B. Davis Company sold a large variety of Rangeley Spinners as can be seen from this page out of their circa 1930 Catalog (Note the unique method of numbering on some blades, above and below):

In addition to the Rangeley Spinner, the Sebago Spinner was “Made Especially for T. B. DAVIS ARMS COMPANY.” Advertised as the “The Ideal Spinner For Trolling,” the Sebago was an updated version of the classic Cupsuptic Spinner of H. O. Stanley and W. T. J. Lowe. In addition to hook harness that featured sliding links to facilitate hook changes, the blade’s underside was entirely plated with gold (versus a silver top and gold bottom in the classic Maine Fishing Lures by Wm. B. Krohn - 136
Cupsuptic) while the upperside of the bade remained the same as the Stanley and Lowes Cupsuptics (i.e., top half plated with silver and bottom in gold). Unlike the classic Cupsuptic, however, the blade on the Sebago Spinner is unstamped.

In addition to being sold by T. B. Davis, the Sebago Spinner was also sold by two tackle dealers in New York City: Williams Mills & Son (blade unstamped) and by H. J. Frost & Company (blade is stamped: “Kelso/ TRADE MARK”). Descriptions and illustrations of the Sebago Spinner, along sizes and prices, can be found in the William Mills & Son catalogs for the 1930-40s (1933, p. 55; 1938, p. 46; and 1941, p. 48). The Sebago Spinners of both New York dealers is similar to the Sebago that was sold by T. B. Davis in that the underside of the blade is entirely covered with gold and the hook harness has been updated with sliding links.

The following photograph shows the characteristic gold underside of the Sebago Spinners along with the updated hook harness. Note also that while the classic Cupsuptic features a box swivels, the Sebago comes with a more modern barrel swivel. The box measures 7 ½  X  1 5/8 X  5/8 inches.
The above Sebago (= Cupsuptic) Spinner should not be confused with spinners stamped “Sebago” made more recently in Massachusetts.

Patented Hook Makers

Jeff Kieny’s 2008 book, *Patented Hooks, Harnesses, and Baited-Holders – Identification and Value Guide with Collections*, includes the patent drawings, photographs, and descriptions for three patented fishing hooks invented in Maine. The three hooks are: (1) a spring hook patented on 1 June 1875 by Ephraim L. Dunlap of Eustis, Maine (p. 16 in Kiney); (2) the “Old Glory,” a fish and animal trap patented on 30 May 1899 by Jacob Cartier of Biddeford, Maine. This patent was co-assigned to Arthur G. Pelletier also of Biddeford, and was sold by Cartier & Pelletier in Salem, Massachusetts (p. 48 in Kiney); and (3) an improved bait hook for casting or *Maine Fishing Lures* by Wm. B. Krohn - 138
trolling patented on 2 August 1921 by Herbert L. Johnson of Yarmouth, Maine. George F. Lowell of Freeport, Maine was assigned this patent by Johnson (p. 129 in Kiney).

**Dunlap Spring Hook, Eustis, Maine**

Spring hooks were not designed for sport fishing, but for subsistence food gathering. Dunlap’s spring hook is the first piece of patented terminal fishing tackle invented in Maine. It is also the last of the patented American spring hook to use a flat-spring instead of a coil-spring.

Note the brass pins used to hold the trap’s two jaws together, and also the stamping on the shaft just below the top eye:

![Spring Hook](image)

Shown below is a close-up of the marking which “PAT JUNE 1 75,” the date that E. L. Dunlap received U.S. Patent No. 163,980.

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Ephraim L. Dunlap was born on a central Maine farm located on a hill above the northeast corner of Embden Lake. His parents were Ephraim and Mary Ann (Lord) Dunlap. Ephraim, Jr. married in the late 1850s and a few years or so later moved to Eustis, in the wilds of western Maine. Here, he and his wife, Margaret, farmed and raised their family. In 1870, the Dunlaps had three sons. In March of 1875 Margaret died, and on June 1 of the same year Ephraim received a patent for the “E. L. Dunlap Fish Hook.” The year after receiving his spring hook patent, Ephraim’s oldest child, George, died. George was laid to rest next to his mother in Sunset Cemetery, North Anson, Maine.

Ephraim, by 1889, had moved to Kingfield, Maine where he worked as a mason. Here, he received two more patents: (1) in May 1889 he obtained a patent for an animal trap (basically a
heavy duty version of his spring hook), and (2) in June 1897 received a patent for a plough that distributed seeds and fertilizer. When 79 years old Ephraim was living his son, John, in New Portland, Maine. Here he died on 17 February 1914. Ephraim was buried next to his wife and son in Sunset Cemetery, only some 8 miles south of where he was born 83 years earlier.

For additional information about the Dunlap Spring Hook, and the inventor’s life and two other patents, see Krohn (2016).

“Old Glory” Fish Hook and Animal Trap, Biddeford, Maine

As mentioned above, the 1899 patent for the Old Glory sure-catch fish hook and animal trap was given to Jacob Cartier of Biddeford, Maine, and co-assigned to Arthur G. Pelletier of the same town. Jacob M. Cartier was born on 11 November 1868 in Scarboro, Maine. His wife, Marie Mathilde, was born in Quebec. The couple lived most of their lives in Saco, Maine, where they raised their seven children and Cartier worked his later years as a machinist. Cartier was a long-time member of the Painchaud’s Band (see photographs online at the Maine Memory Network) and the Saco Fife and Drum Corps. Cartier’s obituary states that he “was held in high esteem by an extensive circle of friends in the two cities [Saco and Biddeford]. His ability as a composer of music was widely known.” Jacob M. Cartier died in Saco on 4 May 1928. He was only 59 years old and, according to his obituary, had been ill for 12 years before his death with “bronchitis.”

Noah Cartier of Biddeford, Jacob’s younger brother, received a U.S. Patent (No. 6,583,141)
in September 1900 for a “Warp-thread and Salvage Guide for looms.” Noah assigned the loom guide patent to Jacob Cartier and Arthur George Pelletier.

Arthur George Pelletier, like Cartier’s family and many others who came to work the mills of northern New England in the 1800s, was from of French-Canadian heritage. He lived his life in Salem, Massachusetts although the patents of 1899 and 1900 give Biddeford, Maine as his residency. In Massachusetts, Pelletier held a number of jobs, including travelling salesperson.

The Old Glory Sure-Catch, only about 3 ½ inches long, is a fierce looking device:

![Image of the Old Glory Sure-Catch](image)

The Old Glory Sure-Catch was sold in the envelope shown below, and although invented by two residents of Biddeford, Maine, it was apparently sold mostly in Salem, Massachusetts:

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The first version of the “Old Glory” (shown above) had a built-in hook whereas a later model (shown below), made of more steel and less brass, had a changeable hook (also see Blauser and Mierzwa 2006: 67, 69):

The shaft of both versions of this fish trap is deeply stamped as follows:

“PAT. SEPT.7.97MAY30 ’99.”

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The first stamping of 7 September 1897 is the date Jacob Cartier received U.S. Patent No. 589,640. As pointed out by Blauser and Mierzwa (2006: 67), this patent was for a fish and animal trap noticeably different than the “Old Glory,” and apparently was not commercially produced. The second stamping of 30 May 1899 is the date that Jacob Cartier received U.S. Patent No. 625,742 for the “Old Glory” fish and animal trap.

At the turn of the century, conservation was emerging and sportsmanship as related to fishing and hunting was hotly debated, including in national magazine. With the public becoming more interested in sport versus subsistence fishing, spring hooks were not warmly received in many circles. As an example of cool reception for this fish trap, consider the following quotation authored by F. M. Johnson of Boston and published in *Forest and Stream* on 17 March 1900:

> Before me to-night is a paper advertising the “Old Glory” sure-catch fish hook and animal trap, with patents held in the United States, Canada, England, Belgium and France. All sizes furnished for kinds of fish and all kinds of animals, from a mouse to a bear. [To the best of my knowledge, the “Old Glory” was made in only one size]. As a device, it is certainly clever enough. Animals or fish cannot escape. It is the most wicked killer I have ever seen or heard of. It takes away every chance, and holds securely its victim.

> . . .

If this is “the most ingenious inventions of the nineteenth century,” then the sooner the twentieth century holds away and blots out even the remembrance of such infringement of fair play the better it will be.

The editor of *Outing*, in a piece published in May 1900, was even more direct:

> If sportsmen would threaten boycott to any dealer who kept for sale this trap under discussion [i.e., “Old Glory”], and associations expel any member using it, and black-list all those others who would not otherwise be reached, me thinks something practical would be accomplished.

What effect, if any, these sentiments had on the sale of the Old Glory is unknown. But today, *Maine Fishing Lures* by Wm. B. Krohn - 144
this device along with the Dunlap Spring Hook, are among the most difficult of all pieces of terminal fishing tackle invented in Maine to find.

**Kismet Manufacturing Company, Freeport, Maine**

Kiney (2008: 129) assigns Herbert L. Johnson’s invention of a spring pin on the front end of a hook only to the Johnson Fish Hook. In addition to this hook being illustrated in the original patent drawing, Kiney provides an photograph of two examples of this hook/spinner on page 129 of his book. But is the Johnson Fish Hook the only lure covered by Johnson’s patent? I think not and below is the evidence I’ve uncovered strongly suggesting that the end product of Johnson’s U.S. Patent No. 1,386,061 was not the Johnson Fish Hook, but the Kismet Casting Hook. But before presenting my evidence, let’s first discuss the inventor.

Herbert Lawrence Johnson was born around 1889, and as an adult taught school and resided in York, Maine. His wife, Lizzie, was a musician. (In addition to the hook patent, in November 1922 Johnson also a patent for a finger grip on a violin bow.). In the hook patent, Johnson assigned his 1921 invention to George F. Lowell, a jeweler and optician from Freeport, Maine. It’s likely that Johnson needed a manufacturer for his invention and Lowell had the skills needed to form metal into the hook envisioned by Johnson. Whatever the reason, the patent – applied for on 29 December 1920 and received on August 2, 1921 – was transferred in the original application by Johnson to Lowell.

In March 1921, the Kismet Manufacturing Company of Freeport, Maine published the following advertisement in both *The American Angler* and *Forest and Stream*:

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Note that a patent had been applied for, and that the ad’s publication date (i.e., March 1921) fits into the 8-month window when Johnson’s patent application was still pending (i.e., after he applied but before he received the patent). Also note that the advertisement emphasizes the hook, calling the product “A New Natural Bait Holder.” Furthermore, the lure itself was named the Kismet Casting Hook and not the Kismet Spinner, again emphasizing the hook:

Finally, the Kismet’s hook is strikingly similar to the hook illustrated in Johnson’s patent drawing (see Kieny 2008: 129; Krohn 2015), and, to the best of my knowledge, it was the only fishing lure made in Freeport during the 1920s. Thus, I believe that George F. Lowell was the author of *Maine Fishing Lures* by Wm. B. Krohn - 146.
founder and owner of Freeport’s Kismet Manufacturing Company, and that Johnson’s Patent No. 1,386,061 should be associated with the Kismet Casting Hook (also see Krohn 2015b).

George F. Lowell died on 19 May 1925 when only 53 years old. With Lowell having only 4 or so years to produce and distribute the Kismet Casting Hook, this Maine bait is not commonly found.

References

Anonymous. 1918. Franklin W. Hobbs. *The Metal Industry*, 16 (6): 285 (June). [A short biographical sketch that includes a photograph of Hobbs, documents his education, and mentions a technical article he authored in 1913 that was awarded a prize by The Metal Industry].


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Johnson, F. M. 1900. The pot-hunter’s friend. *Forest and Stream*, 54 (11): 211 (March 17). [This article was very critical of the Old Glory, seeing this fish trap as an anti-sportsman’s device].


